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ABSTRACT

A pilot research project developed and tested an instrument to measure affective feelings about participating in task groups (grouphate) and to relate that instrument to what participants believed to be true about their group experiences. In 3 small group discussions, 15 members of an undergraduate research methods course identified characteristics or attributes about task group interaction they liked or disliked. Items were further refined into a 14-item negative attribute scale. The students sought out 223 individuals who regularly worked in teams or groups in their work environment to complete the instrument. Several post-hoc analyses further explored positive group attitude and negative group attitude scales. Results indicated that (1) what participants perceive as negative attributes about group interaction does not necessarily make them dislike groups; (2) when participants perceive positive attributes about group interaction, negative feelings about their group experiences decreased; (3) the more group experience participants had, the less apprehensive they were in group meetings; (4) conflicting results about the gender composition of groups abounded; and (5) interaction between gender representation and levels of group experience challenged the already complex group interaction. Findings suggest that attribute scales provide a prototype of a self-report measuring instrument that can be used in group communication classrooms. (Contains 48 references and 3 tables of data; appendixes contain the Group Attribute Scale and types of organizational groups/teams and contexts identified by participants.) (RS)

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Grouphate:

Implications for Teaching Group Communication

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Grouphate:

Implications for Teaching Group Communication

The importance of learning effective group communication skills cannot be overemphasized, and nowhere is that importance more apparent than in contemporary organizations. Eisenberg and Goodall's (1993) summary the necessary workplace skills from a report from the U. S. Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills identified "working on teams, teaching, serving customers, leading, negotiating, and working well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds" (p. 327, emphasis added) as most important. In a recent national survey ("What Employers," 1996), employers ranked oral communication skills, interpersonal skills, and teamwork skills first, second and third in what they seek in job candidates. These ranked above analytical skills, written communication skills, proficiency in field, and computer skills.

The reason group/teamwork skills are so important is because of the amount of time employees spend working in groups and attending meetings. Studies have shown that managers spend 30-80% of their time in meetings (Mintzberg, 1973; Mosvick & Nelson, 1987), and Seibold (1979) pointed out that "if we spend just four hours of work or civic meetings per week, we will have spent over 9000 hours in meetings during an average lifetime--more than one year of our life in meetings!" (p. 4).

Kreps (1990) recently concluded that group interactions are the "primary sites for accomplishing many of the major activities of modern organizations" (p. 169). Most contemporary organizations have adopted group-centered structures because of their potential benefits; after all, group decision making can result in 40-50% increases in productivity over individual decision making ("The Payoff From Teams," 1989). The reasons for this potential increase have been noted by many researchers (see Davis, 1969; Hoffman, 1965; Maier, 1970; Poole, 1991; Shaw, 1981).

There are, however, many potential problems that result from working in groups. The inefficiency of groups is the butt of many jokes, such as "Committees are groups that keep minutes and waste hours" and "A camel is a horse designed by a group." This inefficiency can be very costly; Mosvick and Nelson (1987) reported that inefficient group meetings cost one company over $71 million per year.

The potential problems of group decision making has led many people to dread working in groups, a feeling which Sorensen (1981) labeled "grouphate." Grouphate is clearly a significant problem for organizational employees, for they are expected to interact in groups as part of the structural foundation of the organizations; as members of divisions, departments, units, and work teams, they make decisions about products and services. As employees progress through organizational hierarchies, most will be members of groups, manage groups, or be responsible for groups in some way. Negative feelings about participating in groups thus represent a potentially important obstacle to both individual and group success. As Frey (1995) points out, "To achieve these benefits and prevent groups from floundering, individuals must first adopt more favorable attitudes about working in groups" (p. 4).

While the importance of understanding and confronting grouphate is clear, unfortunately, with the exception of Sorensen's coinage of the term "grouphate," there has, to date, been no systematic study of grouphate. The purpose of the present study was to devise an initial instrument capable of assessing grouphate and to explore the reasons for people's intense feelings of like or dislike for working in groups. As part of that process, we explore the relationship between grouphate and communication apprehension. We also examine two important input variables that the relevant literature suggests may affect people's attitudes toward working in groups. Finally, we conclude with some implications of grouphate with respect to teaching group communication.

Grouphate

Poole (1994) suggests that individuals may dislike group situations because it "runs counter to one of cherished values of U.S. culture, individualism. As a result of the widespread

emphasis on individualism, most people value the individual over the group and attribute more 'reality' and impact to individuals than to groups" (p. 23). While the term grouphate has been used previously (Sorensen, 1981; Wood, Phillips, and Pedersen, 1986), to our knowledge, no studies have entered the mainstream group literature which specifically deal with and operationalize this phenomenon--why some group members detest, loathe, or abhor working in groups and try at all cost to avoid them.

There has been much research done on individuals' attitudes toward working in groups, group member satisfaction, and group effectiveness (Freeman, 1996; Gladstein, 1984; Gouran, 1973; Heslin & Dunphy, 1964; Hirokawa & Keyton, 1995; and Keyton, 1991). But Hackman's (1990) question summarizes these efforts by asking, "Why do people so often have love-hate reactions to groups of which they are members?" (p. 2).

Our suspicion is that negative feelings and attitudes group members bring into the group setting can often materialize into grouphate if they are confirmed in the current group. Keyton (1991) took a situational approach to the study of group satisfaction and separated group dissatisfies from group satisfiers. Her findings indicated that "on the whole, satisfaction is a global attribute as long as the task group is moving along in its expected direction," while dissatisfiers appear to be more situationally oriented. By approaching the study using both group satisfiers and group dissatisfiers, Keyton avoided the methodological presumption of turning positives into negatives and vice versa.

Freeman (1996) found that students' attitudes toward working in a group affect their academic success. Examining satisfaction, frustration, optimism, and communication, Freeman found that liking a group in an academic context leads to better grades and success. Likewise, disliking a group (grouphate) may lead to failure in the group and in the setting (academia) where groups are used.

Moving from an academic context to an organizational context, Gladstein (1984) looked at group effectiveness, group process, group task, group structure, group composition, and organizational structure and resources. Central to our study were her findings about group

effectiveness, specifically group member satisfaction. She found that "group ratings of open communication, supportiveness, active leadership, training, and experience in the organization were all positively associated with group ratings of satisfaction and performance" (p. 511). Thus, group member satisfaction is directly related to group effectiveness. If a member is not satisfied with the group, s/he will not contribute to the effectiveness of the group. This connotes grave implications for groups whose members exhibit grouphate.

Negative and Positive Group Attributes

In studying satisfaction with group interaction, it appears that group members can easily identify characteristics of group interaction and potentially may bring attitudes about past group experiences forward into new group situations. Broome and Fulbright (1995) investigated the barriers to communication in group problem solving. Among these barriers were "undesirable aspects of group situations" (p. 27) which we refer to as negative group attributes. Attitudes toward groups may be formed upon the salient characteristics of one's group experience. Important in their list of undesirable aspects were procedure or decision methodology deficiencies, attitude problems, and unequal distribution of work. Broome and Fulbright also found that "participants viewed attitudes as a major recipient of negative influence rather than a determining factor of group effectiveness" (p. 43). In other words, negative group attributes demonstrated in the group hinder the effectiveness of the group. Similarly, Gastil (1993) identified six obstacles to small group democracy which can be also thought of as negative group attributes: excessive meeting length, unequal involvement in the group, unequal commitment to group goals, cliques and "mini-consensus," differences in communication skills and styles, and protracted interpersonal conflicts. Alternately, Heslin and Dunphy (1964) highlighted status consensus, perceived progress toward group goal, and perceived freedom to participate as three variables that significantly affect group member satisfaction. If these outcomes are achieved, satisfaction should be rated highly

Hirokawa and Keyton (1995) developed a model of facilitators and inhibitors of group performance effectiveness. They found that compatible work schedules, interested/motivated

group members, information resources, good group leadership, and organizational assistance were the facilitators of perceived group effectiveness most frequently mentioned. Moreover, these distinguished between the effective and ineffective groups in the study as "members of ineffective groups were more likely to complain about the absence of those factors in their respective groups, whereas members of effective group were more likely to indicate the presence of those factors in their respective groups" (p. 441).

Group and Meeting Apprehension

Fourth, and central to our investigation, employees will be required or expected to perform in a team environment regardless of their apprehension or negative attitudes toward groups. Employees who are apprehensive in group situations will have to find strategies to overcome their anxiety while employees who have negative attitudes about group tasks will have to develop face-saving techniques or adopt a more productive attitude. Not wanting to or not liking to participate in groups and performing poorly in groups as a result of anxiety or attitude will likely affect employees' overall performance evaluation.

Oral communication apprehension (CA) has been defined as " . . . an individual's level of fear or anxiety with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, p. 78). McCroskey and Richmond (1987) view this construct as a traitlike, personality-type variable, and numerous studies have shown that this communicative predisposition influences people's day-to-day functioning.

Communication apprehension has been most studied with respect to the public speaking context, and relatively little research has been done on CA in groups or meeting contexts. However, McCroskey (1977), Burgoon (1977), Heston (1974), and Daly (1974) each found that reticent individuals interacted less frequently in small groups than non-reticent individuals. Wells and Lashbrook (1970) found that reticent individual's contributions were judged as less relevant than non-reticent group members. McCroskey and Richmond (1976) and McKinney (1982) found that reticent group members were perceived as less credible, less effective, and less likely to be sought for opinion leadership within a group or to emerge as the group's leader than non-reticent

individuals. And, the most recent study by Hawkins and Stewart (1991) found that high apprehensive group members rated both themselves (and were rated by others) to possess fewer emergent leadership skills. Moreover, they were rated by others as being less socially and task attractive than low apprehensives. High apprehensives also engaged in significantly less small talk than low apprehensives. Hawkins and Stewart (1991) noted that "failure to engage in such small talk may have left higher apprehensives out of the relationship building process" (p. 8) which we believe essential to effective group interaction.

While the research on the effects of communication apprehension on group interaction is minimal, McCroskey and Richmond (1992) posit that "in no communication situation is communication apprehension more important than in the small group context . . . [it] may be the single most important factor in predicting communication in a small group" (p. 368). Earlier, McCroskey (1977) found that "one method of avoiding communication, particularly in a small group communication setting, is to talk less" (p. 86). Thus, it would seem that communication apprehension can affect employees' ability to develop work-related relationships in group settings.

Research in other areas of communication apprehension provide insight into the potential effects of CA in group/work team situations. Rosenfeld, Grant, and McCroskey (1995) found that students who were highly apprehensive about speaking in dyads and groups would not be as academically successful as those who had lower levels of CA. Can it be that employees who are apprehensive about speaking out in group/team situations would be less successful on the job? Penley, Alexander, Jernigan, and Henwood (1991) directly investigated the relationship between communication apprehension and work performance and found that managers who avoid the inherent communication requirements of their jobs perform less well. Similar apprehension-to-performance relationships have been found (McCroskey, Booth-Butterfield, and Payne, 1989; Scott and Wheeless, 1977). Given our interest in examining the relationships among grouphate as an attitude, group communication apprehension, and group performance outcomes, other studies also suggest that high apprehensives might be less effective group members (McCroskey, Daly, Richmond, and Cox, 1975; McCroskey, Daly, and Sorensen, 1976).

Gender Differences

As more women enter the workforce and as groups and teams become more prevalent through organizational structures, organizational task teams will be composed of both men and women. Most of the group communication literature focuses on gender effects as it relates to leadership and group discussion based upon college age students. Are the conclusions drawn from this literature valid in an organizational context? Fairhurst (1986) notes:

> In the past 25 years the large number of women entering organizations and assuming occupations and positions of authority once thought to be male domains has dramatically changed the work force of most organizations. . . . they are changing the social order at work. (p. 83)

Research on gender differences has produced inconsistent findings about the ways in which male and female communication differs and affects groups. Stereotypical roles of males and females--such as males being more independent, aggressive and task-oriented and women being more dependent, nonagressive, and interpersonally oriented--dominated the research until the rise of the women's movement (Baird, 1976). Researchers then began to question, first whether gender differences were actually present and, secondly, if they were present, whether they fell into these stereotypical categories.

Much research has examined gender differences in the workplace with respect to conflict styles and conflict management strategies. Gayle (1991) found that "sex is not the most potent indicator of conflict management strategy selection" (p. 165). Her study did not support the expectancy theory postulates that males are more aggressive and dominant while females are more submissive and pacifying. She did find that position and power played a role in conflict management, which speaks to the structural/functional perspective of gender differences. Sorenson, Hawkins, and Sorenson (1995) found that there is a difference regarding psychological type in that males are predominantly "thinkers" and females are predominantly "feelers" on the Myers-Briggs Type Inventory, but this did not significantly influence conflict style preference.

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Taps and Martin (1990) examined gender composition of task groups and the type of attributional accounts given in groups and found that in all-male groups and in groups composed of one female and several males, women's internal accounts were regarded as negative and non-influential. Conversely, they found that in all-female groups women who made internal attributional accounts were more influential and more well liked than those who made external attributional accounts. This finding may suggest that differences in gender composition of task groups affects participants' perceptions of positive and negative group attributes.

In a study about male and female interaction in groups, Mabry (1989) found that "women dominated group interaction" (p. 547). This is contradictory to much of the past research which labels males as the dominant figures of the group. He also found that women used "same-sex interaction preferences." Many questions can be raised as to the reasons why women choose to communicate more with other female group members. Is it because they use similar communication styles or does it reflect a more subtle view by women that their women colleagues are more effective in groups than their male counterparts? Such an attitude would likely affect females' attitudes toward and preferences for group work.

A meta-analysis by Wilkins and Andersen (1991) of research studies on managerial gender communication resulted in minimal communication differences in the communication behaviors (positive affect behavior, influence strategies, autocratic behavior, democratic behavior, negative affect behavior, communication facilitation, and leader emergence) of male and female managers. Moreover, what differences did appear were deemed to be of little social importance. Alternately, Baker (1991) explored the communication practices of women in professional settings and found that differences were apparent in comparison to their male counterparts. She found that women more often practice affiliative/depowering communication strategies while men practice instrumental/empowering communication strategies.

Thus, with respect to the impact of gender composition, no clear conclusions can be drawn. There remains much confusion about gender effects on communication, in general, and in the group or team setting, specifically.

Supervisor Participation

Organizational groups are likely to be multi-functional and supervisors are likely to also participate in task team assignments. Hierarchy obviously impacts interpersonal interaction. What is unclear is how supervisor participation affects team interaction. Employees are likely to be comfortable working with their supervisor in day-to-day task activities. But with the emphasis on organizational teams and decision making pushed to its lowest levels, how will team members respond when supervisors are part of the group? Are group members more apprehensive in these settings because their supervisor who evaluates this and other job performances is present?

Hackman's (1990) case studies of organizational groups vividly describes the role of the supervisors in today's work teams. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted to identify the impact of supervisor participation in work teams. Gayle (1991) found that team members did not select conflict strategies according to the gender of the supervisor. She argued that her findings demonstrated that employees select conflict strategies according to organizational norms and culture rather than who is their supervisor. This study, however, does not tell us if employees would have used different conflict strategies if their supervisor had not been present. In another explanation of conflict management styles, Rothwell (1992) noted that managers use different conflict management styles depending the hierarchical level of the conflicting party.

Allcom (1996) describes different types of work groups of which three have definite leader roles. In the institutionalized group, leadership was designated by the group's operating structure and would likely fall to the supervisor. In an autocratic group, the leader is viewed as omnipotent and in control of the group; once again, this role would likely fall to the supervisor. In an intentional group, a permanent leader may be found among the group's members or leadership may be rotated among members; thus, it's likely that the supervisor would not take on the leadership role. In differentiating between the three groups, Allcom notes that the institutionalized group would follow the organization's structure in accomplishing its work. Thus, the supervisor is seen as a minimal player in the group. In the autocratic work group, the group acts as if the leader will take

care of everything; the leader specifies what is to be done and by whom. In the intentional group, all members take on responsibility for leadership and completing task activities. While no empirical evidence is presented, this theoretical framework demonstrates the impact a supervisor can have on the task and relational aspects of work groups.

In a study of manufacturing employees, Klein (1996) found a complex relationship between supervisor behavior and group cohesiveness under conditions of accelerating work pressure. The two most important dimensions of supervisor behavior were: 1) the extent to which the supervisor encouraged cooperation verbally and in action; and 2) the extent to which the supervisor was seen as having organizational influence. Given that U.S. industry is moving toward group-oriented structures, more research needs to explore the impact of supervisor behavior and performance in work teams.

Hypotheses

The objectives we posed at the beginning of the paper and the literature review led us to develop the following sets of hypotheses and research questions.

Because a negative attitude toward group situations is likely to affect one's task team performance and because attitudes are often link to perceived attributes of team settings, the following set of hypotheses are posed.

H1a: There is a positive correlation between participants' perceptions of negative group attributes and their negative feelings about group work.

H1b: Alternately, there is a negative correlation between participants' perceptions of positive group attributes and their negative feelings about group work.

Communication apprehension is a real phenomenon for many affecting not only communication effectiveness but also one's choice of profession and work environment. This first set of hypotheses explore the link between communication apprehension and group experience. Because meeting and group apprehension are closely linked in the design of the most frequently used apprehension measuring instrument, and because these subscales have high correlations in the literature, corresponding hypotheses are posed.

H 2a: Group apprehension is a predictable function of group experience. As group experience increases, group apprehension decreases.

H 2b: Meeting apprehension is a predictable function of group experience. As group experience increases, meeting apprehension decreases.

H 3a: Group apprehension is a predictable function of supervisor participation. Group apprehension increases when supervisors participate in the task team.

H 3b: Meeting apprehension is a predictable function of supervisor participation. Meeting apprehension increases when supervisors participate in the task team.

Studies have demonstrated that group-level characteristics also affect individual level group variables. As such, the following research questions are posed about the group-level characteristic of gender composition.

RQ 1a: Will the gender composition of work teams affect participants' perceptions of positive and negative group attributes?

RQ 2a: What is the effect of work team gender composition on participants' reports of group apprehension?

RQ 2b: What is the effect of work team gender composition on participants' reports of meeting apprehension?

Finally, our exploration leads us explore a model that represents the complexity of organizational work environments:

H 4: Perceptions of grouphate will be predicted by level of group experience, the participation of the participants' supervisors, and sex composition of the group. Group experience will decrease grouphate while supervisor participation will increase grouphate. The effect of sex composition on perceptions of grouphate is unclear.

Methods

The purpose of this pilot research project was to develop a valid and reliable instrument to measure affective feelings about participating in task groups (grouphate) and to relate that

instrument to what participants believed to be true about their group experiences. Thus, two instruments were developed: 1) a group affective scale, and 2) a group attribute scale.

Instrument Development

Grouphate Scale

Two of the authors generated six attitudinal statements intended to reflect work group participant's feelings about working in groups. The six items were: (1) I like working in groups; (2) I would rather work alone; (3) Group work is fun; (4) Groups are terrible; (5) I would prefer to work in an organization in which teams are used; and (6) My ideal job is where I can be interdependent with others.

Items 1, 3, 5, and 6 were reversed scored and added to the other items; higher scores indicated a negative feeling or attitude about working in task groups or teams. Because of our interest in examining negative attitudes toward group experiences, the scale was labeled the Grouphate Scale.

Group Attribute Scale

In three small group discussions, 15 members of an undergraduate research methods class[1] identified what characteristics or attributes about task group interaction they liked and disliked. The discussions were free-form and lasted about 45 minutes; each group generated its own list of likes and dislikes. Overall, 49 unique items were generated covering both likes and dislikes. After two-weeks, class members were asked to think of a current or recent work group and rate how true on a 5-point Likert-type scale each like and dislike statement was about the particular group they had chosen as their focus.

To provide representation of extreme negative and positive attributes, the top third dislikes (17 out of 49 items; items above 3.6 on 5.0 scale) were chosen to constitute the negative attribute scale. Three of these items concerned scheduling of meetings; the item with the highest mean was retained and the other two similar items were dropped. Two items concerned member inequity; the item with the highest mean was retained. This resulted in a 14-item negative attribute scale. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .81, mean was 54.40 (sd 8.05), and the

minimum/maximum range was 37 to 66. Likewise, the top third likes (18 items out of 49; items above 3.7 on 5.0 scale) were chosen to constitute the positive attribute scale. Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .93, mean was 77.67 (sd 11.39), and the minimum/maximum range was 57 to 100. The negative and positive group attribute scales were not correlated (r=.32, p=.25). Thus, all 31 items were used as the Group Attribute Scale in the second phase of this project (see Appendix A). The instrument was designed so that higher scores indicated that these attributes were more likely to be true of participants' group experiences.

Data Collection

Students identified earlier were the primary data collectors for the project. They were instructed to seek 20 individuals who regularly worked in teams or groups in their work environment. Individuals who were approached and did not meet this criterion did not participate in this study. To verify participation, respondents were asked to identify the organizational group or team they used as a reference in completing the questionnaire. Students were allowed to participate if their group experiences were with one ongoing group (e.g., campus project committees). This list of organizational groups and contexts is shown as Appendix B.

To further refine our assumptions about positive and negative group attributes (Group Attribute Scale) and attitudes about working in groups (Grouphate), the two scales detailed above and the group, meeting, and dyadic apprehension subscales of McCroskey's PRCA[2] were combined into one data-collection instrument. The dyadic subscale was included to diffuse our focus on the group and team context. Participants were also asked to identify their level of work group experiences (low, moderate, or high), whether their supervisor was a regular member of their work group, and the gender composition of their work group (all-female, all-male, or mixed).

Results

Of those individuals approached to participate in the study, 223 were participating or had participated in work groups or work teams and agreed to participate in the project. Over half (56.1%) identified themselves as having high levels of group experience, while 35.9% identified themselves as having moderate group experience. Thus, the majority of this purposive

convenience sample reported that they regularly participated in work groups and work teams. Slightly more than one-half of the participants (59.0%) indicated that their supervisor was a regular member of their work group or team. Overwhelmingly (76.5%), participants reported that their work teams were composed of both females and males. Only 12.7% of the participants indicated they belonged to all-female work teams and 10.9% reported their work teams as being composed of all males. Complete descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 1.

Hypotheses 1a-1b

Hypothesis 3a suggested a positive correlation between participants' perceptions of negative group attributes (NGA) and their negative feelings about group work as measured by the grouphate scale. The null hypothesis is accepted as the correlation between these two variables was nonsignificant ($r = .116$, $p = .08$). Alternately Hypothesis 3b suggested a negative correlation between participants' perceptions of positive group attributes (PGA) and their negative feelings about group work as measured by the grouphate scale. The null hypothesis is rejected as the correlation was significant ($r = -.48$, $p = .0001$) and accounted for 23% of the variance. Thus, as participants' identification of positive group attributes increased, their negative feelings toward the group decreased.

Hypotheses 2a-2b

We assumed that the more group experience one gains, the more likely group apprehension would diminish. This hypothesis was confirmed by ANOVA, $F (2,220) = 13.69$, $p = .0001$. Accounting for 11% of the variance, those participants with a self-identified high level of group experience had lower group apprehension ($M = 12.37$) than those individuals with moderate ($M = 14.91$) or low ($M = 15.00$) levels of group experience. Accounting for slightly more variance (12.3%), the ANOVA predicting meeting apprehension from level of group experience was also significant, $F (2,220) = 15.59$, $p = .0001$. Participants with a self-identified high level of group experience had lower group apprehension ($M = 12.71$) than those individuals with moderate ($M = 15.83$) or low ($M = 16.44$) group experience.

Hypotheses 3a-3b

Hypotheses 2a and 2b tested the impact of supervisor participation on group apprehension and meeting apprehension. Both models were not significant, F (1,220) = 0.82, p = .366 and F (1,220) = 2.16, p = .143, respectively.

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked whether the gender composition of work teams affected participants' perceptions of positive and negative group attributes. The effect of sex composition on positive group attributes was statistically significant, $F(2,218) = 3.07$, $p = .05$; the model accounted for 3% of the variance. All-female groups had higher positive group attribute scores (M = 73.21) than all-male groups (M = 68.42) or mixed groups (M = 69.68). Similarly, the effect of gender composition was statistically significant with respect to negative group attributes, $F(2,218)$ = 3.54, p = .031; the model accounted for 3% of the variance. All-female groups had lower negative group attribute scores (M = 46.25) than all-male groups (M = 50.13) or mixed groups (M = 50.33). These results thus demonstrate that a gender effect as female participants reported more positive group attributes and less negative group attributes than participants in all- male or mixed gender groups.

Research Questions 2a-2b

Research Question 2a asked about the effect of work team gender composition on participants' reports of group apprehension. This effect was statistically significant, $F(2,218)$ = 3.77, p = .03; the model accounted for 3% of the variance. Mixed sex groups had lower group apprehension scores (M = 13.08) than all-female groups (M = 14.64) or all-male groups (M = 14.83). Research Question 2b asked about the effect of work team gender composition on participants' reports of meeting apprehension. The ANOVA was nonsignificant.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 asserted that perceptions of grouphate could be predicted by level of group experience, participation of subjects' supervisors, and the gender composition of the group. It was hypothesized that group experience would decrease grouphate while supervisor participation

would increase grouphate; the effect of group gender composition was unclear. The ANOVA model was not significant, F (17,202) = 1.54, p = .08, although it accounted for 11% of the variance. Gender composition was a significant contributor to the model (sr^2 = 4%) at the .05 level. The gender composition by group experience interaction effect also contributed 4% of the model's variance; the alpha level was .05. Mean grouphate scores for level of sexual composition were: all-female groups, M = 13.64 (sd 4.13); all-male groups, M = 15.04 (sd 3.57); mixed groups, M = 14.63 (sd 4.00). Although the overall model was not significant, we report the results because of the indication it may give about future research directions. The interaction effect for gender composition by level of group experience is shown below. It appears that when groups had female members, levels of grouphate were lower regardless of level of group experience. This effect was moderated by level of group experience in the mixed- gender groups.

Post-hoc Analysis

Further exploration of the PGA and NGA scales appears warranted. Using the current data set, participants were divided by the median score (NGA median = 50; PGA median = 78) into high and low groups on both scales to create a 2 x 2 matrix. Of the sample of 223, 19.28% reported both low NGA and PGA scores; 30.04% reported both high NGA and PGA scores. These participants might be labeled *group apathetic* and *group highly involved*, respectively. More complementary scale scores were reported by 26.01% of the participants as they had high NGA scores and low PGA scores. Alternately, 24.66% of the participants had high PGA scores and low NGA scores. These participants might be labeled *group dislike* and *group like*, respectively.

An analysis of variance procedure was used to test the ability of these high and low groupings and their interactions to predict grouphate. The model was significant, F(3,219) = 11.78, p = < 001. The total model accounted for 14% of the variance while participants' PGA scores accounted for 12.70% of the variance. Mean grouphate scores for the high PGA group was 13.21 (sd 3.39) while mean grouphate scores for the low PGA group was 16.19 (sd 4.20). Finding no significant interaction effect, a regression model tested the continuous relationship

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between grouphate and participants' perceptions of negative group attributes (NGA) and positive group attributes (PGA). The regression model was significant, $F(2,220) = 35.41$, $p=<.001$, and accounted for 24% of the variance. Mirroring the results of the ANOVA, only the PGA scale contributed to the model. β was -.480 with unique variance of .23.

Because we are interested in the continued exploration of these constructs for future experiments, factor analysis was conducted on both the PGA and NGA scales. Principal factors extraction with varimax rotation was performed independently on each scale. Principal components extraction was used prior to principal factors extraction to estimate the number of factors. Three factors were extracted for both subscales as indicated by scree plot analysis. The varimax rotation for the PGA items resulted in three subscales with some double loading items. Oblique rotation was used to further refine and to aid interpretation. The final factor loading structure rotated via Procrustean Transformation using a .3 retention cutoff is shown in Table 3.

The varimax rotation for the NGA items resulted in one dominant factor and two negligible factors. Oblique rotation did not improve variance accounted for or the interpretation of the scale. As a result, one NGA factor is retained; its items are marked with * in Appendix A. The resulting uni-dimensional factor, named "dislike," accounted for 18% of the variance.

Another post-hoc analysis identified the PGA and NGA factors that dominated participants' perceptions about their groups. The following items had means of 4.0 or higher on a 5.0 scale.

High PGA Items

I get to know more about other people.
There are more resources to draw upon.
I get to meet other people.
I learn how to work as a team member.
You can learn "people" skills.
You can improve your interpersonal communication skills.

High NGA Items

Different people use different methods to solve proems or make decisions.
Some group members move at a different pace than I do.

All of the other PGA and NGA items had means between 3.07 and 3.98. All of the high-PGA items were retained in the factored PGA scale; the two high-NGA items were not retained in the NGA uni-dimensional scale after rotation. The high-PGA items may be perceived as givens in a group communication course, but we believe that this assumption is faulty. High group or meeting apprehensive individuals may have difficulty tapping into these positive group attributes by making themselves unavailable for interpersonal interaction. Less apprehensive individuals may not feel anxiety, but lack the social skills that allow for smooth interpersonal interaction to occur. The high-PGA items certainly point to the importance of social and interpersonal skills in group situations. Lacking the skills or the opportunities to practice such skills would seem to hinder organizational team success. The two high-NGA factors speak to the differentiation that is inevitable in group settings.

Discussion

The post-hoc analysis of the positive and negative group attribute scales provides a prototype of a self-report measuring instrument that can be used in group communication classrooms. Used at the beginning of the semester, both students and instructors could identify instructional needs. Students could be encouraged to set personal goals for a written assignment by examining their scores. By examining the scores, instructors would know which elements of group interaction need to be emphasized. Likewise, the grouphate scale introduced in this manuscript can serve as a quick pre- and post-test measure of attitudes toward groups. Finally, our post-hoc analysis of the high-PGA and high-NGA items suggests that instructors should avoid making assumptions about learning objectives in classroom simulations--that the students will simply "get it" about group interaction. Detailed debriefings of classroom role plays and simulations will help to sharpen students' focus on their abilities to learn and use interpersonal skills in group settings.

With respect to the differentiation issues identified by the high-NGA items, instructors should monitor group interactions for these pacing and decision-making methodology issues. If they surface, instructors could use them as teaching opportunities. Classroom simulations

should not be so structured where such issues cannot arise. To do so is to deny students the opportunity to deal with groups that replicate their real-life counterparts. Over-structuring group classroom assignments may shortchange our students in their ability to identify such problems and what to do to solve them. It is unlikely that organizational teams are given the type of structure instructors impose on classroom groups. Thus, to help students make the transition between the group communication classroom and the work team environment it should be our objective to help students identify their own apprehension about group communication situations, and identify any existing negative attitudes they bring to group interactions. In doing so, we will help them address problems more quickly and respond with appropriate skills and strategies.

The results of hypotheses 1a and 1b suggest a more complex view of participants' beliefs and feelings about group and team work. The nonsignificant relationship between NGA scale and the grouphate scale suggests that what participants perceive as negative attributes about group interaction does not necessarily make them dislike groups. Perhaps participants come to group situations with an understanding that group interaction does manifest interaction difficulties (e.g., It's hard to get all group members to agree), and this is an accepted aspect of group and team interaction, a necessary evil, if you will. This should not suggest that group communication instructors should ignore these issues. Rather, we should continue to develop methods for helping students overcome the inherent problems in bringing a diverse group of people together for discussion and decision making.

The significant negative correlation between the positive group attribute scale and grouphate provides a different view of group interaction. When participants perceive positive attributes about group interaction (e.g., There are different views), negative feelings about their group experiences are decreased. This suggests that when groups develop positive attributes or when individuals believe their groups possess such attributes, negativity about group interaction is reduced. Here, the instructional advice is to give students the tools necessary to make sure the positive attributes about groups exist within their specific group. We shouldn't leave it to chance.

The second set of hypotheses achieved expected results: the more group experience one has, the less apprehensive one is in groups and meetings, with the effect slightly more pronounced for meeting apprehension. Using standardized normative behavior, low apprehension in each of the group and meeting contexts is considered to be a score of 12. The data reported for this sample reports group apprehension mean as 13.49 and meeting apprehension as 14.12. Thus, the results need to be interpreted with this caveat in mind. Little research has examined the effectiveness of minimizing group communication apprehension. McCroskey (1977) refers to systematic desensitization, noting that while the method is highly effective for most people with high communication apprehension, "it is highly advisable that at the outset of a program designed to provide such treatment at least one person involved have a background in counseling or clinical psychology, have been trained by such a person, or have worked in a similar program previously" (p. 91). Obviously, this area is ripe for practical examination and research.

The group communication classroom is an opportunity for rich and complex simulations to provide students with the experience they may be lacking or with more positive groups than they have experienced. Many of the group communication texts address skills; more address procedure, while some address process. Perhaps, more attention should be given to coupling what is likely to happen (process) and how to address some of the likely-to-occur moments (skill). This would produce the ideal process-skill format as a foundation for instructional techniques and perhaps provide an alternative means for diminishing the anxiety of high apprehensive students.

Interestingly, supervisor participation in the groups and teams did not affect participants' levels of group and meeting apprehension as reported in second set of hypotheses. Perhaps group and team decision making has been more thoroughly integrated throughout organizational structures than presumed. What is unknown, however, whether supervisor participation changes the manner in which group members interact in these settings. The data suggest that supervisor participation does not affect levels of apprehension; but not being apprehensive does not mean they have adopted effective coping or interaction behaviors to adapt to the supervisor's presence.

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It is difficult, but not impossible, to simulate hierarchical positions in classroom groups. Although the data do not suggest a strong need for such an instructional technique, perhaps a few role-playing exercises with hierarchical implications should be conducted within the semester.

Conflicting results about the gender composition of groups abound. Given the more recent emphasis on organizational work teams, we felt justified in asking the research question. All-female groups reported higher positive attribute scores than all-male or mixed-gender groups. Likewise, participants in all-female groups reported lower negative group attributes scores than all-male or mixed-gender groups. These results suggest that females are more receptive to group situations in general and/or are better at maximizing the positive while minimizing the negative aspects of group interaction. This is similar to Freeman's (1996) findings that female students got along with other group members better and felt that the group was a more effective context than did males. Similarly, in their examination of gender orientation and leadership, Gurman and Long (1992) explained that "in the absence of men and the discrimination by men against women in mixed-gender groups, women are relieved of the expectation of defense to male leadership and are free to rely on their own strong feminine identity" (p. 397). These studies provide justification as to why women perceive all-female groups more positively. Such gender differences may "be due to differences in women's attributional tendencies" (Forsyth & Kelley, 1994, p. 381) in which women are more likely to credit other women for group success.

Such results give credence to mixed-gender groups and monitoring those groups to ensure that women take or are given adequate opportunity to participate. If women's perceptions about groups are more positive then men, then their positive influence may prove beneficial in organizational teams and groups--if they are active participants. One instructional technique for helping students to check their gender-based perceptions about group interaction would be to assign students to a first discussion in a same-gender group then subsequently assign students to a second discussion in a mixed-gender group. External observers could monitor quantity and quality of participation in these different scenarios. Group participants could measure attitudes through apprehension instruments.

While the model generated by Hypothesis 4 was not significant, the direction of the results demonstrates that the interaction between gender representation and levels of group experience can significantly challenge the already complexities of group interaction. Further research is warranted in these two areas given the trends realized in the first set of hypotheses as well.

Unfortunately, there have been few studies (e.g., Freeman, 1996) or books (e.g., Phillips, 1990) which examine the effectiveness of group instruction strategies and pedagogical techniques. This coupled with the traditional focus on skill and procedure in group communication instruction has created a deficit with respect to the relationship between effective process and relationship development within group and team settings. It seems reasonable that the relational aspects of group work would impact students' satisfaction with working in groups, and, thus, have an impact on learning about group procedures. Clearly, the results presented here suggest that group communication instructors should give pedagogical attention to both procedural and relational issues.

Thus, our teaching objective should be to prepare students to make the transition from classroom group discussion to organizational team environments. We must further explore the complex relationships among these variables in their situational environment to develop effective teaching strategies which will help students make such a transition. Jarboe (1992) notes that one of the initial challenges in the group communication classroom is that "students come with their own group experiences that have shaped their attitudes and created their assumptions about groups" (p. 16). The more meaningful the instructional group experiences we provide to students, the less resistant they are likely to be in learning and the more likely we will help them with classroom-to-employment transitions.

Obviously, it is difficult to replicate organizational environments within classroom exercises and role plays. Kelley and Phillips (1992) argue that classroom conditions must include:

> lines of authority, a legitimate charge or contract of performance, voluntary participation under rules, and a continuity of process. There must also be deadlines, supervision, evaluation, and concern with content, especially the practical issues requisite to effective

> solutions, programs, and proposals. These include logistical issues, budgets, and the persuasive appeals necessary to gain program approval. (p. 4)

But careful choice of simulations and role-plays (see Keyton, 1994) can alleviate some of these difficulties. Diagnostic evaluations using the Grouphate Scale and Positive and Negative Attribute Scale presented here, situationally appropriate exercises, and analytical debriefings after group interactions are likely to be a combination that can benefit students in the group communication classroom.

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Appendix A

Group Attribute Scale

Negative Group Attribute Subscale (NGA)

*Some group members do too much while others do too little.
*There are scheduling conflicts.
*It's hard dealing with difficult group members.
Different people use different methods.
*It's hard to get all group members to agree.
Some group members move at a different pace than I do.
*Not all group members have the same sense of purpose.
You have to rely on others.
The group gets the credit instead of the individual who did the most/best work.
*Some people are shy around others.
*Some of the group members are not in the mood to work in a group.
Your group is compared to other groups.
*There is always a fear of someone not showing up.
*You have to play catch-up when a group member doesn't show up or doesn't do their part.

Positive Group Attribute Subscale (PGA)

I get to know more about other people.
There is more input.
There is greater objectivity.
We can specialize; each group member gets to use his/her own talents.
Others' strengths compliment my weaknesses.
There are more resources.
There is chance to network with others.
There are different views.
I get to meet other people.
I learn how to work as a team member.
I get feedback on my ideas.
Group members can brainstorm with one another.
I like to meet new people
It breaks the monotony.
You are able to understand different points of view.
You can learn "people" skills.
You can learn from others' experiences.
You can improve your interpersonal communication skills.
You can improve your listening skills.
You learn how to be tactful.

* items were retained as a single factor NGA scale after varimax and oblique rotations. See post-hoc analysis for detailed information.

Appendix B

Types of Organizational Groups/Teams and Contexts Identified by Participants

customer support team
activities team
time keeper committee
seminar committee
GSA service unit
programming committee, campus
advertising
news room meeting
honor society
newspaper production staff meeting
morale picnic
military communications team
morale committee
committee to determine duties of watch standers
administrative group
military unit
faculty search committee
remodeling committee
operations department
conservation planning
restaurant team work
medical procedures
mapping department
data entry
construction management
hotel national guard unit
retail sales team
banking
automotive worker
curriculum planning committee
engineering class project
church group
elementary school office
cheerleader booster club
film shoot group
relocation planning committee
parent support group for public high school
fundraising group
sports camp for children
medical office
organization of monthly programs on specific issues
hall staff for resident life
republican executive committee
student senate
work team at international firm
library staff
architectural firm
law firm

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Notes

[1]The undergraduate research methods class was generally comprised of non-traditional age students who were employed full-time. This particular class aided the project in reaching the convenience sample it desired.

[2] McCroskey developed the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) exploring communication apprehension in the public speaking, meeting, group, and dyadic contexts. To date, it is the most widely used and accepted instrument to measure CA (Beatty, 1994).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1-Positive Group Attributes		-.026	-.482**	-.134*	-.051	-.133*
2-Negative Group Attributes			.116	-.039	-.049	.007
3-Group-hate Scale				.298**	-.152*	.201
4-Group Apprehen-sion					.875**	.858**
5-Meeting Apprehen-sion						.828**
6-Dyadic Apprehen-sion						
Mean	77.964	49.780	14.561	13.493	14.120	13.211
sd	8.552	7.594	4.049	3.830	4.604	3.896
min/max	36/98	26/67	6/29	6/28	6/28	6/27
Cronbach	.838	.751	.797	.814	.880	.848

*p<.05
** p<.001

Table 2

Grouphate Means by Sex Composition and Group Experience

sexual composition	group experience	M	sd
all female	low	10.000	2.646
all female	moderate	14.727	4.585
all female	high	13.571	3.756
all male	low	15.667	2.082
all male	moderate	16.600	3.507
all male	high	14.438	3.795
mixed	low	17.750	4.595
mixed	moderate	14.984	3.835
mixed	high	13.989	4.015

Table 3

Factor Structure of PGA Items

PGA Items	Interaction Opportunity	Interde-pendencies	Team
I get to know more about other people.	.338		
I get to meet other people.	.743		
You can learn "people" skills.	.569		
You can improve your interpersonal communication skills.	.462		
I like to meet new people and working in this group lets me do that.	.711		
There is greater input because we work as a group.		.706	
There is greater objectivity because we work as a group.		.698	
We can specialize; each group member gets to use his/her own talents.		.361	.350
Others' strengths compliment my weaknesses.		.388	.338
There are more resources to draw upon.			.448
I learn how to work as a team member.			.420
I get feedback on my ideas.			.515
You can learn from others' experiences.			.612
Working in groups breaks the monotony.			.330
Proportion of Variance Explained	**8.89%**	**7.25%**	**6.84%**
Covariance	**38.70**	**31.53**	**29.77**